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PART

FOREIGN OFFICE

DEPT. EASTERN

TITLE: GENERAL - Political Affairs, Multilateral. P.L.O.

Policy - Policies

Opening of New Offices

File No. E 2/3

[redacted]

REFER TO			REFER TO			REFER TO		
DEPT.	NAME	DATE	DEPT.	NAME	DATE	DEPT.	NAME	DATE
E	Grant.	4/1						
IRD	Mr Macrae	25/1						
V.	Mr. Macrae	27/1						
E	Mr Mabarak.	30/1						
E	Mr Sandell.	1/3						
V.	N.E.A.D.	6/3						
I.R.D.	Mr. Macrae.	9/3						
V	N.E.A.D.	27/3.						
PR	I.R.D.	8/4						

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- 6 JAN 1967
E2/3

BRITISH EMBASSY,

RABAT.

2 January 1967

(10711/66)

Dear Macrae

E1075153

Would you please refer to my letter 10711/66 of 8 November in which I reported attempts by the Palestine Liberation Organisation to open an office in Rabat.

2. After further lobbying and manoeuvring (my Saudi colleague talks darkly about "pressures from Cairo"), the PLO has finally succeeded and now has an office in the centre of Rabat complete with billboard and Palestinian flag (and situated just round the corner from the appartment occupied by the Jordanian Counsellor here!). The Director is Hisham Arafat.

3. As far as we have been able to gather from various sources, King Hassan decided that it would be less risky for him to incur King Hussein's anger than to lay himself open to accusations from the PLO and from Cairo of obstructing the cause of the liberation of Palestine and he therefore finally agreed that the office should be established here. You may have seen in the BBC Summary of World Broadcasts that the "Voice of Palestine" announced that the Moroccan Foreign Minister, M. Cherkaoui, met M. Choukheiry in Cairo on 9 December to discuss the activities of the PLO office in Morocco and that an official PLO source has expressed gratitude to "Arab Morocco - King, Government and people" for the facilities offered to the PLO office. How the Jordanians feel about this decision we do not know, but it is generally believed here that assurances have been given to King Hussein that the PLO office will be required by the Moroccans to confine itself to innocuous pro-Palestine and anti-Israel propaganda and that the PLO's conflict with Jordan will not be referred to.

4. Whether the PLO office will stick to its imposed brief is another matter, and there are some Moroccans who foresee trouble, not only in Moroccan-Jordanian relations, but for the Moroccan régime. For example, elections to the committee of the Moroccan branch of the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) took place at the PLO office on 27 December. Amongst those elected were Adnan Abdallah Sheikh Hassan as branch president and Ismail Hussein Khalil as member for cultural affairs, who will also represent the branch at the 5th congress of GUPS. The question is being put whether there is much point in King Hassan's continuing to refuse permission for Egyptian teachers and professors to come to Morocco when he is now permitting GUPS activities in the universities.

5. I am sending copies of this letter to Cairo, Amman, Algiers and Washington.

With best wishes for the New Year,

Yours ever,

Adrian Sindall

(A.J. Sindall)

J.E.C. Macrae, Esq.,
North and East African Department,
Foreign Office,
S.W.1.

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ARCHIVES No 17
- 6 JAN 1967
E2/3

BRITISH EMBASSY,
RABAT.

(10711/66)

2 January 1967

Dear Macrae,

In my letter 10711/66 of 2 January I reported the opening in Rabat of a PLO branch office.

2. This letter is just to say that as none of us here are PLO experts, we should welcome any guidance from you on those aspects of the PLO's activities in which you are particularly interested and on which you would welcome any information which we may be able to pick up. What kind of monkey tricks do they usually get up to elsewhere?

Yours ever

Adrian Sindall

(A.J. Sindall)

J.E.C. Macrae, Esq.,
North and East African Department,
Foreign Office,
S.W.1.

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(B)

Friday 30:00

Type 1 +

To:—

A.J. Sindall
Rabat

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES No. 15

E 2/3

From
A.E. Saunders.
Telephone No. & Ext.

Department

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

E. Rel. Attached
Could you please get a copy of these.

LR 6/46
15 NOV.

IRD
NEAD

30.i

I am replying to your letters No. 10711/66 of 2 January to Macrae, about the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

We were [redacted] interested to hear that the P.L.O. had opened an office in Rabat and we should welcome any further information you can let us have about their activities. In answer to your enquiry about the Organisation I cannot do better than to attach a copy of a memorandum which was recently prepared by Joint Research Department. I think it will give you a good idea of the type of tricks the P.L.O. is likely to try. Since the attached paper was written, Shuqairy and the whole of his P.L.O. propaganda machine has come out very strongly against the King and the P.M. in Jordan, and We have good reason to believe that they are supporting terrorist activities in Jordan. What we should particularly be interested to know is the degree of support which the Moroccan Government give to the P.L.O.'s activities. The obvious ~~points~~ means which come to my mind are training facilities for the Palestine Liberation Army and for example the imposition of a special tax to help finance the Organisation's activities in any form.

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RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES No. 15

E 2/3

E 2/3

FOREIGN OFFICE,
London, S.W.1.

1 February, 1967.

I am replying to your letters No. 10711/66 of 2 January to Macrae, about the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

We were interested to hear that the P.L.O. had opened an office in Rabat and we should welcome any further information you can let us have about their activities. In answer to your enquiry about the Organisation I cannot do better than to attach a copy of a memorandum which was recently prepared by Joint Research Department. I think it will give you a good idea of the type of tricks the P.L.O. is likely to try. Since the attached paper was written, Shuqairy and the whole of his P.L.O. propaganda machine has come out very strongly against the King and the P.M. in Jordan, and we have good reason to believe that they are supporting terrorist activities in Jordan. What we should particularly be interested to know is the degree of support which the Moroccan Government give to the P.L.O.'s activities. The obvious active means which come to my mind are training facilities for the Palestine Liberation Army and for example the imposition of a special tax to help finance the Organisation's activities in any form.

Document LR 6/46 15/2/66.

(A.E. Saunders)

A.J. Sindall, Esq.,
Rabat.

SECRET

With the compliments of

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

LONDON, S.W.1

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(10711/67)

BRITISH EMBASSY,
RABAT.

24 February, 1967.

E 2/3

Dear Saunders,

Thank you for your letter E 2/3 with its interesting enclosure, addressed to Adrian Sindall (whom I have now replaced), about the Palestine Liberation Organisation .

2. As requested, we are keeping our eyes and ears open about its activities here in Morocco. What we have heard so far confirms our previous impression that the Moroccan Government permitted it to open an office here as a reluctant concession to Pan-Arabism and the U.A.R., in compliance with a decision taken at the last Arab Summit Conference in Casablanca. This office is subsidised entirely from the organisation's headquarters in Cairo, while the Moroccan Government is keeping a close look-out for any sign of subversive activity. Its initial attempts to insert articles in the local press have been discouraged especially since the open breach with Jordan and Shuquairi's declaration of war on King Hussein. The local director, Hashem Arafat, has theoretically the status of an ambassador but he keeps - or is kept - very much to himself and is actively cold-shouldered by the Foreign Ministry.

3. With reference to the facilities which the office affords to the General Union of Palestine Students (paragraph 4 of Sindall's longer letter 10711/66 of 2 January, 1967), the Jordanian Ambassador informs us that there are no more than a hundred Palestinians in Morocco, and that his embassy has warned them that their passports will be withdrawn if they frequent the PLO. This of course can only apply to legally registered Palestinians with Jordanian passports; it is an open question how many Egyptians and others there are there of Palestinian origin.

4. I will of course report any further information we may receive.

5. I am sending a copy of this letter to Chancery, Amman and to British Interests Section in the Canadian Embassy, Cairo.

Yours ever,

Antony Southorn

(A. L. Southorn)

A. E. Saunders, Esq.,
Eastern Department,
Foreign Office,
S.W.1.

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10711/67

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E 2/3

BRITISH EMBASSY
RABAT

25 April 1967

Dear Saunders.

In my letter 10711/67 of 24 February, I recorded some of our initial impressions about the office of the Palestine Liberation Organisation which was set up recently in Rabat, and I also undertook to report on its activities. This letter is the first of such reports: you will see that there is not really very much to it.

2. It would seem that the Organisation's aim is two-fold: to keep Zionist atrocities in the public eye, and at the same time to give the impression of solidarity with, and support from, the Moroccan authorities. In the past two months the Organisation have issued two statements on anniversaries of key events in the history of Israel and of Arab/Jewish relations. The first of these was on 6(?) March, the 10th anniversary of Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, and the second was on 9 April, the 19th anniversary of the Deir Yassin massacre. Both statements

(a) denounced Jewish terrorism;

(b) attacked the collusion between the forces of imperialism and zionism, and

(c) called for unified action by all Arabs against the foe.

3. So much for the aim of publicising "Israeli crimes". In pursuit of the second aim (the creation of an impression of complete harmony between the Organisation and Morocco), the office addressed a statement of greetings to the King and the people on the occasion of the important Muslim festival Aid el Kebir on 21 March. This too had a didactic aim, as it expressed in conclusion the pious hope that King and people would overcome their enemies and that they would liberate Palestine from imperialism and hateful Zionism! Finally, after the official PLO decision to set up militia detachments in all Arab countries, the Rabat office issued a statement claiming (with absolutely no justification, so far as we know) that hundreds of young Moroccans were calling daily to offer their services in the glorious cause of the liberation of Palestine.

4. These activities seem to have left the authorities here completely unmoved. Perhaps a significant pointer to the official Moroccan attitude to the Organisation was a short item carried by the official news agency Maghreb Arabe Presse which reported in laconic and sarcastic terms Shuqairy's "prophecy" that King Hussein

/would

A.E. Saunders, Esq.,
Eastern Department.

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2nd Hussan too ... ?!

would inevitably be overthrown by the Jordanian army and people. The report concluded: "Mr. Shuqairy did not reveal when Israel's turn would come, refraining in this way from showing his secret trumps".

5. I am sending copies of this letter to Chanceries at Cairo and Amman.

Yours ever,

Antony Southorn

(A.L. Southorn)

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No 15
-7 NOV 1967
E2/3

(10711/67)

BRITISH EMBASSY,
RABAT.

27 October, 1967.

E2/3

Dear Saunders,

I last reported on the activities of the Rabat office of the PLO in my letter 10711/67 of 25 April, before the Middle East crisis.

2. As you know, public opinion in Morocco became caught up in the wave of excited euphoria which swept through the Arab world at the end of May, and even the government - whose heart was not really in it - succumbed briefly to the emotional nationalism engendered by the situation. No doubt the PLO played its part in fanning the flames, ably seconded in this by the Chinese (whose Ambassador was frequently in conference in their office at this period), but even so their propaganda was not given any government boost. And there is one fact which tells its own story: on 10 June - five days after the outbreak of hostilities - the nationalistically inclined Istiqlali press reported the departure by train for the Middle East of a group of the Moroccan Palestinian community headed by leading members of the PLO. We were subsequently informed that the government was behind this move, taking a heaven-sent opportunity to get rid of the most embarrassingly vociferous Palestinians. I do not know how many of them returned here, but the PLO has been even quieter since the cease fire than it was before. No doubt it is continuing to spread agitation, but I can only imagine that the major part of its activities are carried on behind closed doors.

The Moroccans are good at this. I recall how they threw out Egyptians in 1964

3. The climax of its year was probably the rally organised in Rabat on the Anniversary of the "usurpation of Palestine", 15 May. For this occasion they had hired the Rabat municipal theatre, which was filled to capacity: not, as claimed in one paper, with "intellectuals of every tendency", but with rough workmen surrounded by their wives and children. In fact a large proportion of the audience was made up of unaccompanied children, and despite the well drilled applause which predictably greeted the various speakers, there was a

/constant.....

A. E. Saunders, Esq.,
Eastern Department,
Foreign Office,
LONDON, S. W. 1.

LAST PAPER

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constant coming and going throughout as people went out into the lobby to speak to their friends or to buy ice creams. Moreover, after the first half hour there was a steady exodus from the theatre.

4. The role played by the Moroccan government in this celebration is ambiguous. At the beginning of May the PLO office had denied a report in an Egyptian newspaper that the Moroccan government was curbing its activities in Rabat and stated that on the contrary it was receiving every possible support and encouragement. The rally was then publicised as taking place under the auspices of the Moroccan government, and indeed the Under-Secretary at the Foreign Ministry tried to persuade the Jordanian, Tunisian and Saudi ambassadors to attend it, on the grounds that it was government-sponsored. Yet when the time came the government representative billed on the programme to appear failed to materialise.

5. In fact, this ambiguity is in accordance with the normal Moroccan line in Arab affairs, of giving vocal support on the one hand while remaining inactive, or going their own way, on the other. Be that as it may, where its own interests are involved the government does not hesitate to act. In particular, it refused to allow Palestinian students to take part in the May Day parades because it did not wish to be embarrassed by any PLO-inspired denunciations of friendly Arab governments such as those of Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

6. For the rest, the Organisation seems to devote its time to issuing literature and holding the occasion film or discussion evening. As a result of the Arab/Israel war it is possible that its influence has increased among dissident nationalist elements here, but we do not know how effective the office here is at present. Despite the apparent ambiguity of the government's attitude, however, I think there can be little doubt that it wastes no time over the PLO, which in turn appears to have little impact on the local scene.

7. I am copying this letter to Chanceries at Cairo and Amman.

Yours ever,

Antony Southorn

(A. L. Southorn)